

# IN THE WORKS

*TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON*

*February 2005*

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## **PERSONNEL REFORM ON TRACK FOR JULY 1**

July 1, 2005 – the effective date for the major components of personnel reform – is less than five months away and preparations for implementation are moving forward at a rapid pace. Most of the new infrastructure is ready to go, including new bargaining agreements, civil service rules, the option to competitively contract and the first phase of job classification changes.

The primary focus now is on providing training, aligning agency internal policies and practices to support the new direction, and getting the new computer system ready to go.

### **Computer system update**

Last month, the Department of Personnel (DOP) announced that it was suspending the date to “go live” with the new Human Resource Management System (HRMS). DOP and the primary project contractor are working on a revised project plan, which will be released in mid-February.

In the meantime, contingency plans are being put in place to make sure that the current personnel/payroll computer system will be able to support the key components of personnel reform for the short term until the HRMS is up and running.

Personnel reform is fundamentally about creating an environment that supports better management of the state’s human resources. While HRMS is one of the tools that will help us get there, many reform elements have little or no reliance upon the system for implementation.

As with the other components of personnel reform, the number one goal is to have a quality system that supports the needs of state government now and well into the future. It is taking longer to get there than originally planned, but significant progress has already been made and DOP and the project contractors are focused on resolving the remaining issues as soon as possible.

## **COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING MANUAL UPDATE**

General Administration is nearing completion of the Competitive Contracting Manual for state employees. The nine-chapter document is expected to go through a final review in February and be ready to distribute in March.

The manual is aimed at a target audience of middle- to executive-level managers. While all state employees may use some of the content, General Administration assumes that the primary users will be those involved in making the competitive contracting decisions.

Training will most likely take place this spring. ★

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*In the Works* is an electronic newsletter based at the *Washington Works* website: [www.washingtonworks.wa.gov](http://www.washingtonworks.wa.gov)

## TRAINING FOR A NEW HUMAN RESOURCE ENVIRONMENT

From the person entering data in the payroll system to the managers finding their way through new human resource practices, nearly everyone in state service will need training – at some level – to implement the changes resulting from personnel reform.

That's why the Department of Personnel, the Labor Relations Office and the Department of General Administration have teamed up to provide a full range of training opportunities in support of personnel reform.

Since the changes affect so many people scattered across the 71,303 square miles of our state, information is flowing out in several ways including:

- Classroom training.
- Train-the-trainer (where agency staff are trained to be trainers, able to conduct local or employer-specific sessions).
- Webinars – both 'live' and recorded sessions delivered online.
- Guidelines, fact sheets and other guidance tools – online or in print.
- Consultation with Department of Personnel readiness coaches.
- Electronic Learning Network (ELN) courses (online offering at participants' own pace).

For more information on training available now, go to the Department of Personnel web site at [http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington\\_works.htm](http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington_works.htm). ★

### What classifications were identified as being more than 25% behind market rate?

The list of positions identified in the 2002 Salary Survey as being more than 25% behind market rate is available on the Department of Personnel's website. The list contains the current salary ranges and the proposed salary ranges of the affected positions.

Find a link to both the higher education and general government position list at: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/pay/2002SalarySurvey.htm>

## TARGETED TRAINING PLAN

### Human resource professionals

across the state are learning about competencies, job analysis, new rules, recruiting, just cause, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and other related topics from the Department of Personnel.

They also are getting training from the Labor Relations Office on internal labor relations, learning about the contracts that apply to their organizations, and the grievance and arbitration process.

Those who work directly with the new human resource management computer system have started their multi-step training in the new environment.

### Mid-level managers & supervisors

will begin training in March to make sure they have the knowledge they need by July 1. Training will include some of the same topics as human resource professionals — competencies, job analysis, recruitment and others.

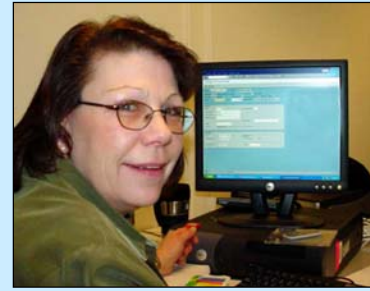
**Non-managerial employees** will have opportunities to get some broad, system-wide information in July. More specific training will need to be in their own environments since bargaining agreements and agency decisions will influence the way the new systems are implemented locally.

Employee business unit training will only be offered as needed. It will be available after July for those employees, human resource professionals and managers whose employer is considering competitive contracting options.

## TRAINING PROVIDES HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WITH NEW HRMS COMPUTER SYSTEM

Sitting before the glowing screen of a PC at the Department of Personnel's Olympia training facility, Patty Stewart swivels to and from her keyboard responding to questions and demonstrating her point on the PC.

"HRMS is very user-friendly, it is menu driven, has drop down entry options for most fields and an online quick reference feature that helps users understand entry requirements. People won't need to learn so many codes," says Stewart.



*Patty Stewart is a volunteer trainer for HRMS.*

### First chance to see new system

Stewart is addressing an eager audience of personnel and payroll staff at one of the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) end-user training sessions that began January 10. For most, this was their first chance to see and use the new system. They are curious about how it will look and how it will change the way they do their work.

Stewart says that upon arriving at class, most trainees are excited to finally see the new system, but cautious, even a little skeptical, that it will be an improvement. When they leave, however, most say they are comfortable with the system and will be proficient with some practice.

Stewart, a Department of Social and Health Services employee, and her training partner, Wayne Donaldson, who works for the Department of Transportation, are two of many volunteer trainers on loan to the HRMS Project by their state agency employers.

### Training moves forward

Even though the planned implementation date for HRMS has been delayed, DOP is proceeding with end-user training while the new implementation plan is being developed. Moving forward on the training gives end-users a chance to see and use the new system, provides training staff valuable insight on the effectiveness of their courses, and enables the participants to relate what they learn to streamlining their agency's business processes.



*Participants get a peek at the new system.*

A look at trainee comments from the 28 sessions provided in the first two weeks of hands-on training confirms that moving forward with training was a sound decision. "Found this to be a win/win training for both trainers and participants," noted one participant. Another wrote, "I think this gives me a good start. The session also brought up things that will need to be addressed in our agency processes."

A training database, to be available in February, will provide participants a place to practice the exercises that they receive in class. In addition, depending on the new timeline, refresher courses will be available if necessary. HRMS project leaders will announce the new implementation plan in February, at which point DOP will either continue with the training schedule as planned or revise it to align with the new timeline. ★

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## REFINEMENT CONTINUES ON WMS RULES

The informal comment period for the draft Washington Management Service (WMS) rules wrapped up January 31. Department of Personnel staff will spend the next several days reviewing all of the comments received and will determine what revisions to make based on this feedback.

The revised rules will be posted for one last review period prior to proposed adoption at the March 10 Director's Meeting. Watch for them to be posted around February 18.

### Some proposed changes

Key areas in which the new rules would differ from the current WMS rules include:

- The new rules would define the role and accountability of WMS managers for properly leading and managing their human resources and fostering the building of a performance-based culture that will enable workforce success.
- The new rules would allow agencies that have received Performance Management Confirmation to provide progression increases based on sustained performance.
- Agencies would be required to receive Performance Management Confirmation in order to give lump sum recognition pay to WMS managers.

A thorough comparison of the proposed and current rules is available at <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/rules/WAC357WMSRulescomparison.doc>.

### ? How do I find out when my position might be affected by class consolidation?

Job classifications are being phased into the new occupational categories over a period of years. Some classifications will be consolidated in June of this year, some in January 2006, and the rest are not likely to be affected until the '07-'09 biennium.

To find out if your job class is on the current list to move into the new consolidated classification system, check the Department of Personnel website:

<http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/classplan.htm>.

If your classification does not appear in Group 1 or Groups 2 or 3, then it will not be affected during these first two rounds of consolidations (June 2005 and January 2006). The schedule for changes beyond 2006 is still being worked out.

*Have feedback? Email it to  
[washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov)*

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aspect of the reform effort.*